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ENG 4300-002: Senior Seminar: The 1890s/ 1990s

Ruth Hoberman
Eastern Illinois University

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English 4300
Ruth Hoberman
Ch 339 A

Fall 1998
Phone: 581-6289
e-mail: cfrh@eiuh.edu

Office Hours: 10-12 MWF and by appointment

Senior Seminar: The 1890s/1990s

Texts: Conrad, The Portable Conrad
Doyle, Sherlock Holmes: Major Stories
Gissing, The Odd Women
Showalter, Daughters of Decadence
Stoker, Dracula
Wells, The Time Machine
Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray
Amis, London Fields
Kipling, The Jungle Book (we'll find copies somehow)
various hand-outs (Yeats, Hardy, Lee)

Goals: Focusing on a single decade will allow us to read its literature while steeped in the social and historical issues of the time. This should result in a clearer sense of how literary texts respond to and are shaped by the culture in which they are produced.

It should also result in a fascination with the decade itself: writers of the 1890s faced many of the same issues we do today--loss of religious faith, technological change, upheaval in societal attitudes toward gender and sexuality, economic and racial inequities. Their responses are weird and fascinating and sometimes strikingly similar to our own.

I'm also hoping we'll gain some insight into how the sense of a century's ending in general affects us. The "fin-de-siecle" (the term used to refer to the 1890s because it was the "end of the century") writers felt themselves at the end of something, much as I think we do as we await 2000. For this reason we'll conclude with works from the late 20th century, from which we can perhaps gain some insights into our own fears and expectations about the future.

Policies: English Department statement on plagiarism:
Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of NC for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of

Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Come to class prepared. You'll have more fun if you've done the reading, and I will notice if you haven't. Because this is a seminar, participation in class is particularly important and will count for 20% of your grade. The brief written responses due at frequent intervals also make it imperative that you keep up with the reading. Overall, 40% of your grade is based on activities that require keeping up class by class.

If you run into problems/questions of any kind, come see, call, or e-mail me!

Requirements: research paper (stages must include proposal, annotated bibliography, draft, and final version of 10-15 pp.)
 group presentation (on author/work)
 individual presentation (on research project)
 midterm
 1-2 pp. typed responses due every to every other week
 careful preparation of reading assignments
 and participation in class discussion

Group presentation: I will place you in groups of 2-3 members, based on the author you request. The group is responsible for leading the class on the assigned day. Plan on presenting material for 10-15 minutes maximum. The rest of the time should be devoted to class discussion.

Your presentation should cover the following material:

1. Chronology of major events and publications in author's life
2. Description of major themes or characteristics associated with the author's work (feel free to focus on just one or two)
3. Bibliography of 10-15 items (check for the existence of an autobiography, published letters, major biography, and particularly interesting scholarly articles)
4. List of 10 or so discussion questions for the class to respond to.

Responses: Within each 1-2 week period, you may choose the class on which you hand these in, but the response must be about the reading assigned for that day, and you must be in class on the day you hand it in. Your response should focus on something small and specific and develop and should quote directly from the text at least once. Late responses will not be accepted.

Grades: 30% on research paper/individual oral presentation
 20% on midterm
 20% on participation
 20% on responses
 10% on group presentation

Essay grades will be based on Standards for Grading Themes at EIU. I plan to use number rather than letter grades; this will convert into your final grade as follows: 91-100=A; 81-90=B; 70-80=C. 65-69=D. Because I grade on a 100-point scale, missing assignments affect the grade tremendously.

Tentative Syllabus

Wed Aug 26: Introduction to the class

Fri 28: Wilde, Picture of Dorian Gray (1890). ch. 1-4.

Mon. 31: Wilde ch. 5-10.

Wed Sep 2: 11-16.

Fri 4: ch 17-20. Schreiner in Showalter (1890), 308-317.
(Response due F/M/W or F.)

Mon 7: no class

Wed 9: **Group presentation #1:** Doyle. "Scandal in Bohemia" (1892), 32-53; "Red-Headed League" 53-74; "A Case of Identity" 75-90

Fri 11: "Boscombe Valley Mystery" 90-112; "Man with the Twisted Lip" 112-133

Mon 14: "The Blue Carbuncle" 133-151; "The Speckled Band" 152-174

Wed 16: Egerton in Showalter, 47-68 (1893). (Response due W/F/M/ or W)

Fri 18: **Group presentation #2:** Gissing. The Odd Women (1893) ch 1-VII

Mon 21: ch VIII-XIV

Wed 23: ch XV-XXI

Fri 25: XXII-XXVIII

Mon 28: XXIX-end (response due F/M/W/F or M)

Wed 30: **Group presentation #3:** Kipling. The Jungle Book (1894)

Fri Oct 2: Kipling.

Mon 5: Cross and Levenson in Showalter (1895), 6-46.

Wed 7: **Group presentation #4:** Wells, Time Machine (1895)

Fri 9: Wells.

Mon 12: Midterm (take-home and in-class).

Wed 14: Wotton and Lee in Showalter (1896), 139-164; 192-261.

Fri 16: Lee (hand out). (response due W/F/M/W or F)

Mon 19: **Group presentation #5:** Stoker. Dracula (1897) ch 1-VI

Wed 21: Stoker. ch VII-XI

Fri 23: no class: fall break

Mon 26: ch XII-XVI

Wed 28: XVII-XXI

Fri 30: XXII-end. (response due M/W/M/W or F). Hand in research proposal and 10-item bibliography.

Mon Nov 2: Conrad, "An Outpost of Progress" (1898), 459-89.

Wed 4: Group presentation #6: Hardy. Wessex Poems (1898) (hand out)

Fri 6: Hardy (response due M/W or F)

Mon 9: Group presentation #7: Yeats. (hand out)

Wed 11: Yeats. Hand in revised proposal and 10-item annotated bibliography.

Fri 13: Group presentation #8: Amis. London Fields

Mon 16: Amis

Wed 18: Amis

Fri 20: Amis

Nov 21-29 Thanksgiving Recess

Mon Nov 30: Amis

Wed Dec 2: Amis (response due M/W/F/M/W/F/M or W)

Fri 4: conferences: bring draft of research paper.

Mon 7: oral presentations

Wed 9: oral presentations

Fri 11: oral presentations. Hand in research paper.

Make sure you stop by my office during finals week to pick up your research paper.